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Farm Broadcasters Letter



Letter No. 2182

September 27, 1984

**USSR GRAIN
AND FEED**

In the Soviet Union, the most recent harvest progress report stated that as of Sept. 17, some 98.8 million hectares, or 87 pct., of the small grains and pulses area had been cut, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This compares with 104.2 million hectares cut by Sept. 19, 1983, and 107 million by Sept. 20, 1982. More than 50 pct. of the area in four districts in West Siberia remained to be harvested. The corn area harvested for grain as of Sept. 17 was 656,000 hectares, compared with 1.4 million a year ago. USDA currently estimates the harvested area for small grains and pulses in the USSR this year at 115.7 million hectares and 4.3 million of corn for grain. (NOTE: One hectare equals approx. 2-1/2 acres.)

**SPACE SHUTTLE
TO LOOK UNDER
CALIF.**

As the space shuttle Challenger passes 140 miles above farms near Fresno, Calif., highly specialized radar will measure water in soil down to six inches below the surface, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The flight is scheduled for Oct. 5. The shuttle's moisture-sensing radar will be switched on for one pass each day over the target farms on the fourth, fifth and sixth days of the mission. (Information during the flight may be obtained from: Albert Rango, USDA, Beltsville, Md., 301/344-3490; Claude J. Phene, USDA, Fresno, Calif., 209/487-5337; Edwin T. Engman, USDA, Beltsville, Md., in Fresno, days 209/487-5337, evenings 209/252-3611.)

**SOYBEAN
RATE: \$5.02**

The final loan and purchase rate for 1984-crop soybeans will be \$5.02 per bushel, the same as the preliminary rate announced earlier and the minimum permitted by law, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. All producers of 1984-crop soybeans will be eligible for loans and purchases since USDA does not require farmers to take part in production adjustment programs as a condition of eligibility.

**FARROWING
INTENTIONS**

Hog producers in the 10 Quarterly States intend to farrow 2.26 million sows during Sept.-Nov. of this year, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This is 5 pct. fewer than during the comparable period in 1983, and 4 pct. fewer than two years ago. Farrowing intentions for Dec. 1984-Feb. 1985 quarter are 1.91 million head, 1 pct. below a year earlier and 9 pct. below two years earlier.

United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Information

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HOG & PIG
INVENTORY
DOWN

Inventory of all hogs and pigs on Sept. 1, in the 10 States conducting quarterly hog surveys, is estimated at 42.8 million head, 7 pct. below last Sept. 1, but 3 pct. more than Sept. 1, 1982, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Breeding inventory, at 5.52 million head, was 5 pct. less than a year ago, and 1 pct. below two years earlier. Market hog inventory, at 37.3 million head, was 7 pct. below last year, but 3 pct. more than 1982. (For more info., call 202/447-6880.)

.60 PIGLET
LOOKS BETTER
THAN A .36
PIGLET

The June-Aug. 1984 pig crop was 16.9 million head, 4 pct. below last year but 4 pct. above two years ago, according to the U.S. U.S. Department of Agriculture. There were 2.23 million sows that farrowed during June-Aug., a decrease of 7 pct. from a year ago but 1 pct. more than the same period two years ago. Sows farrowing during June-Aug. 1984 averaged 7.6 pigs per litter compared with 7.36 last year and 7.39 during the comparable period two years ago.

CROPLAND
UP FOR CROPS

Cropland used for crops--cropland harvested, cropland on which which crops failed, and cultivated summer fallow--is expected to total 370 million acres in 1984, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This is up 11 pct. from last year when about 76 million acres were idled in acreage reduction programs. Only about 30 million acres were diverted in 1984 as producers responded to higher crop prices. Cropland used for crops peaked at 390 million acres in 1981, when there were no diversion programs. Cropland used for crops next year will be directly affected by the 1985 farm programs. (For more info., call Roger Hexem, 202/475-5705.)

SOYBEAN
STOCKS

The Sept. 1 carryover of old crop soybeans into the 1984-85 marketing year totaled 175 million bushels (4.76 million metric tons), 49 pct. below last year and 31 pct. below Sept. 1, 1982, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Soybeans stored on-farm total 68.3 million bushels (1.86 million metric tons), down 42 pct. from both last year and Sept. 1, 1982. On-farm stocks accounted for 39 pct. of the soybeans stored in all positions. Off-farm stocks, at 107 million bushels (2.90 million metric tons), were down 53 pct. from last year and 22 pct. below two years ago.

SUMMARY OF
1985 PROGRAMS

Sec'y of Agriculture John Block summarized the 1985 farm programs before the House Committee on Agriculture. His summary, briefly:

Wheat: 20 pct. acreage reduction, 10 pct. land diversion program. Feed Grains: 10 pct. acreage reduction program. Upland Cotton: 20 pct. acreage reduction program and a 10 pct. paid land diversion. Rice: 20 pct. acreage reduction program and a 15 pct. paid land diversion program. Signup period for all programs is Oct. 15 through Mar. 1. Producers may request 50 pct. of their projected deficiency payments and 50 pct. of their 1985 diversion payments when they sign up.

FROM OUR TELEVISION
SERVICE

"Current Agricultural Outlook" ... The current outlook for agriculture calls for excellent prospects for increased crops, higher prices for cattle and greater net farm income this year. USDA economist Keith Scearce focuses on factors contributing to this outlook. Victor Powell interviews. (216)

"Sugars and Sweetners Outlook" ... World sugar price has declined to its lowest point in fifteen years, and the outlook calls for heavy supplies and slow demand. USDA economist Robert Barry talks about factors contributing to this situation. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (217)

"Soviet Grain Situation" ... USDA economist Ed Cook talks about the decreased Soviet grain harvest and factors contributing to this decrease, including wet weather and cold temperatures. Jim Johnson interviews. (218)

"Farm Cooperatives Update" ... Randall Torgerson, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Cooperative Serv., comments on cooperatives and how they are becoming increasingly important to farmers. Victor Powell interviews. (219)

"Federal Crop Insurance Update" ... Merritt Sprague, manager of USDA's Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, focuses on this system and how it offers savings to taxpayers and improved coverage for farmers. Victor Powell interviews. (220)

FARM CREDIT
PLAN

President Reagan's farm credit initiatives, announced Sept. 18, are designed to help farmers caught in the cost-price squeeze who are experiencing severe financial stress but who show promise of success with an extra economic boost. Under the plan, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will: Reschedule up to 25 pct. of a qualifying farmer's loan, to a maximum of \$100,000, for as long as five years with no interest payments. The plan also guarantees a non-FmHA borrower's farm loan if the lender is willing to write off a minimum of 10 pct. of the loan, up to the amount necessary to achieve a positive cash flow for the borrower.

COMMENTS
ON PEANUT
PROGRAM

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is asking for comments on changes in the peanut program. The most important change will will give limited flexibility to handlers who use the substitution provisions of Commodity Credit Corporation regulations for the 1985 peanut crop. Under certain circumstances handlers may sell "contract additional" peanuts into the domestic market, provided a like quantity of quota peanuts of the same area, type and screen size is exported. Another change will standardize the deduction for moisture from the gross weight of farmer stock peanuts at 7 pct. Send comments by Nov. 26 to: Director, Tobacco and Peanuts Division, ASCS/USDA, Room 5750-S, P.O. Box 2415, Wash., D.C. 20013.

OFF MIKE

We are now distributing our television programs via satellite... a major milestone in the USDA Radio and Television Division. Beginning Oct. 1, we began the following schedule on Westar IV, Transponder 10/D, Audio 6.8: Each Thursday, 2:30-3:00 p.m. Eastern Time, A BETTER WAY, our half-hour consumer-oriented magazine format program; each Friday, 2:30-3:00 p.m. Eastern Time, DOWN TO EARTH, our farm/agri-business oriented series of five 4-1/2 minute news features, plus AGRICULTURE UPDATE, Nelson Robinson's ASCS five-minute newscast format program; and each Friday, 3:30-3:45 p.m., a 15-minute news offering, with AG UPDATE and news actualities on every other week, beginning Oct. 5, and news actualities and news features on the alternate weeks. We will continue to send videotapes to stations that cannot access Westar IV ... An offer you may want to take advantage of. Sec'y Block has released a series of 14 commodity background papers to help focus the debate on the provisions of the upcoming 1985 farm bill. The commodities are: wheat, corn, sorghum, oats, barley, soybeans, rice, sugar, honey, wool and mohair, cotton, tobacco and peanuts. If you want copies for your own use, call us at 202-447-4330 ... Our sympathies are with Charlie Might (NAFB Exec Sales/Mktg Director) whose mother died Sept. 17 in Ohio ... James A. Koehler is the new farm director at KYCK, Grand Forks, ND ... Sept. 25 was the date for the big "Bob Buice Appreciation Day" at the Arkansas 4-H Center near Ferndale. During the event, ground was broken for the Bob Buice Swimming Pool at the 4-H Center. Bob started broadcasting in 1936 and has been with KARN in Little Rock since 1940 and is presently farm director emeritus at the Arkansas Radio Network and KARN ... Roy Isom (KMJ, Fresno, CA) is back from two weeks in China and another week in Hong Kong and Taiwan. He broadcast daily from China, which was "...tough, but I did it." The "tough" came through getting phone connections back here, he said ... Jerry Urdahl has left WEAU-TV in Eau Claire, WI, and is now with a new venture, the Ag News Network in Neillsville, WI. The new network has 10 stations and will be adding more when the network goes up on satellite next month.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1426...Rebecca Keiper takes a look at three three aspects of direct farmer-to-consumer marketing.

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1415...USDA news highlights; Agricultural space shuttle project; Semi-dwarf rice; Frances, the guard mule.

CONSUMER TIME #908...Helping with the personal unemployment crisis; manipulating the insect world; "Floating" checks; Easier organ transplants; High marks for human milk.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE...Fri, Oct. 5, Vegetable production; Wed, Oct. 10, Crop and weather update; Thurs, Oct. 11, World and U.S. crop production (coverage of Challenge Forum on new uses for farm products); Fri, Oct. 12, World tobacco situation, USSR grain outlook; World crop supply and demand. Dial the USDA National News lines 202-488-8358 or 202-488-8359. All material changed at 5:00 P.M. EDT each working day.


JAMES L. JOHNSON, Acting Chief

Radio-Television, Office of Information

P.S. Last week's listing
for Agri-Tape/Farm Program
Report had 2 PSA's for
World Food Day showed
The date as Oct 26. This
is wrong. It should be Oct 16.